



441 Freedom Parkway NE
Atlanta, GA 30307

<http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov>

Midge Costanza Papers: A Guide to Her Papers at the Jimmy Carter Library

Collection Summary

Creator: Costanza, Margaret, 1932

Title: Midge Costanza Papers

Dates: 1975-1981

Quantity: 33 linear feet, 8 linear inches; 77 Containers

Identification:

Accession Number: 16-03.a

National Archives Identifier: 76089502

Scope and Content:

The material in this collection consists of memorandums, correspondence, schedules, invitations, reports, press clippings, published articles and materials, speeches, handwritten notes, telephone messages, and background working materials. These materials relate to Midge Costanza's role as Assistant to the President for Public Liaison, and document her outreach activities concerning minority communities including women, LGBT, African Americans as well as religious and ethnic groups. Also included are materials from her role as Co-Chairman of the 1976 Carter/Mondale Campaign in New York; material relating to International Women's Year meetings; and reorganization of the Executive Office of the President, specifically the restructuring of the Public Liaison Office.

Creator Information: Midge Costanza

Midge Costanza was born on November 28, 1932 in LeRoy, New York and was raised in Rochester, New York. She began her political career as a volunteer for W. Averell Harriman's gubernatorial campaign in 1954; she later served as executive director of Robert F. Kennedy's 1964 Senate campaign. She served as a Democratic National Committee member from 1972 until 1977. Costanza became an outspoken advocate for LGBT rights and, in 1973, became the first woman elected to the Rochester (N.Y.) City Council. She then served as vice mayor of the city from 1974 to 1977.

She lost a race for the United States House of Representatives in 1974 to the popular Republican incumbent. In 1976, when Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter ran for President

of the United States, Costanza served as co-chair of his New York campaign operation and gave a seconding speech for him at the Democratic National Convention.

Upon Jimmy Carter's election, Costanza was named Assistant to the President for Public Liaison, moving into the office next door to the Oval Office. Costanza was nicknamed "the President's window to the nation", consulting with a wide array of groups.

She invited members of the National Gay Task Force to the White House during Anita Bryant's controversial Save Our Children campaign. She also hosted a group of 30 women in protest of the president's opposition to federal abortion funding. She was featured on the cover of Newsweek with the headline "Woman in the White House."

After resigning from her White House post, she coached political candidates in public speaking and worked to get Barbara Boxer elected to the Senate in 1992. California Governor Gray Davis appointed Costanza as a special liaison to women's groups, a position she held until 2003.

She was a professor at San Diego State University, where she worked with the political science and women's studies departments. She created the Midge Costanza Institute at the University of California at San Diego to help young people engage in political and social activism.

Costanza was also active with an AIDS research organization and fought for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. She worked tirelessly to elect more women to public office. In 2005, she joined the San Diego district attorney's office as public affairs officer focused on the prevention of elder abuse.

In 2011, she was inducted into the San Diego County Women's Hall of Fame at the Women's Museum of California.

Midge Costanza died on March 23, 2010 at the age of 77.

Restrictions:

Restrictions on Access: These papers contain documents restricted in accordance with applicable executive order(s), which governs National Security policies, applicable statutes/agency restrictions, and material which has been closed in accordance with the donor's deed of gift.

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Related Material:

Related materials in this repository: White House Office of Public Liaison Files

Related materials in other repository: Midge Costanza Institute at the University of California at San Diego

Separated material: Photographs transferred to Audio Visual Department

Index Terms:

Limited to major topics under each category
Persons: Midge Costanza; Jane Wales;

Organizations: National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL); National Advisory Committee on Women (NACW); National Gay Task Force (NGTF); Democratic National Committee (DNC); National Organization for Women (NOW); National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC)

Subjects: Women, gay rights, equal rights amendment; domestic violence; abortion; employment; neighborhoods; urban policy; Christians

Places: Rochester, New York; Monroe County, New York

Types of Material: Memorandums, correspondence, schedules, invitations, reports, press clippings, published articles and materials, speeches, handwritten notes, telephone messages, and background working materials.

Administrative Information:

Preferred citation: [Type of Document], [Names of Sender and Recipient or Title of Document], [Date], [Collection Title], [Series Title], [Folder Title], [Box Number], Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

Acquisition information: These donated historical materials were received under provisions of the instrument of gift that Doreen Mattingly signed on May 11, 2016.

Processing information: The collection was opened in June, 2019.

System of Arrangement:

The records of the Midge Costanza Papers are divided into eight series:

Series Title	National Archives Identifier
Midge Costanza's Subject Files	76089503
Midge Costanza's Correspondence Files	140093725
Midge Costanza's Scheduling Files	140093727
Midge Costanza's Office of Public Liaison Files	140093728
Midge Costanza's Invitation Files	140093730
Midge Costanza's International Women's Year Files	140093738
Midge Costanza's Women's Issues Files	140093745
Midge Costanza's 1976 Campaign Files	140093753

Detailed Description of the Collection

[Midge Costanza's Subject Files](#)

Scope and Content: Containers 1-28. This series was opened in June 2019. The series consists of memorandums, correspondence, reports, schedules, resumes, meeting minutes, press clippings, speeches, handwritten notes, detailed telephone messages, and background working materials. The material relates to Midge Costanza's outreach efforts towards minority groups, mainly women, and other groups concerning controversial issues such as abortion, passage of the equal rights amendment, battered women, child care, gay rights, and ethnic neighborhoods. Also included are documents and letters detailing her resignation, White House reorganization efforts, and minutes of Cabinet and White House staff meetings. Arranged alphabetically by subject.

[Midge Costanza's Correspondence Files](#)

Scope and Content: Containers 29-39. This series was opened in June 2019. The series consists of correspondence concerning a wide variety of topics such as the equal rights amendment, gay rights, abortion, women and employment, health care, the environment, nuclear energy, and amnesty for draft dodgers. Also included is general correspondence such as support and thank you letters, "angry" letters, random mail, and personal requests. Arranged chronologically or by subject.

[Midge Costanza's Scheduling Files](#)

Scope and Content: Containers 40-51. This series was opened in June 2019. The series contains a voluminous amount of Midge Costanza's scheduling requests including staff meetings, travel events, White House tours, White House meetings with special groups, and other miscellaneous events. The schedules often include to and from correspondence, background briefings and information on specific groups, and travel information. Arranged chronologically.

[Midge Costanza's Office of Public Liaison Files](#)

Scope and Content: Containers 52-54. This series was opened in June 2019. The series consists of specific information relating to the functions of the Public Liaison Office such as daily activity calendars, staff meeting summaries and accomplishments, weekly reports, and memorandums. The series also contains documents relating to the White House reorganization of this office that subsequently resulted in Midge Costanza's resignation. Arranged alphabetically by subject.

[Midge Costanza's Invitation Files](#)

Scope and Content: Containers 55-61. This series was opened in June 2019. The series consists of invitations for speaking engagements, local community events both inside and outside of the D.C. area, political fundraising events, and personal invitations such as dinners, birthday celebrations, and weddings. The series also contains regretted invitations. Arranged chronologically.

[Midge Costanza's International Women's Year Files](#)

Scope and Content: Containers 62-66. This series was opened in June 2019. The series consists of correspondence, memorandums, notes, reports, press releases, members list, and printed publications. The material relates to the Carter Administration records on women appointments

to the White House, schedule of events, various state reports, and the future implementation of stated resolutions on women's issues. Arranged alphabetically by subject.

[Midge Costanza's Women's Issues Files](#)

Scope and Content: Containers 67-74. This series was opened in June 2019. The series consists of correspondence, memos, reports, notes, and background information. The material relates to specific women's issues such as affirmative action, discrimination in employment, federal women employment, female presidential appointments, housewives rights, women owned businesses, and women in the arts. Also included is material from women's groups such as the National Advisory Committee on Women (NACW) and the Interdepartmental Task Force on Women. Arranged alphabetically by subject.

[Midge Costanza's 1976 Campaign Files](#)

Scope and Content: Containers 75-77. This series was opened in June 2019. The series consists of campaign schedules, speeches, press articles correspondence, and memorandums. The material relates to Midge Costanza's role as co-chairman of the Carter/Mondale presidential campaign for the state of New York. Materials include lists of members committees and delegates, state issues, budgets, plans, organizational files, and fundraising. Arranged alphabetically by subject.

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